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Synthesis of Linton and Charlton Theories

In James Charlton’s “The dimensions of Disability Oppression,” he discusses how dominant culture, through socialization, power and many other factors, oppresses people of the disabled community. Somewhat of a hierarchy is formed, and a clear definition of who is being oppressed, is established. In Simi Linton’s “Reassigning Meaning,” she argues that society tends to devalue the disabled through the use of specific negative language. Both authors put forth the idea that the disabled community is unfortunately devalued and often ostracized. In a section her article where she elaborates on the process of “passing,” or attempting to appear “normal,” Linton states, “For a member of any of these groups, passing may be a deliberate effort to avoid discrimination of ostracism, or it may be an almost unconscious, Herculean effort to deny oneself of the reality of one’s racial history, sexual feelings or bodily state”(229). The idea that Linton presents is an example of one effect of society’s oppression. Because of the fact that dominant culture establishes “norms,” people that may not seem to fit into these stereotypes try to conform.